



# Californians Against Waste

Conserving Resources. Preventing Pollution. Protecting the Environment.

March 24, 2009

Sam Schuchat  
Ocean Protection Council Secretary  
Coastal Conservancy Executive Officer  
Ocean Protection Council  
California Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1300  
Oakland, CA 94612

## **RE: Master Environmental Assessment on Carry-Out Bags—Support**

Dear Sam,

We greatly appreciate the Ocean Protection Council's ongoing efforts to reduce plastic litter and waste and strongly support the council's contribution of expertise and resources in the creation of a Master Environmental Assessment to help demonstrate the environmental impacts of policies restricting the use of single use plastic bags. While we believe that common sense and any reasonable review of impacts will demonstrate a substantial net environmental benefit associated with the reduction of single-use bags, including plastic bags, we believe that this formal assessment will assist local jurisdictions in combating harassment lawsuits financed by plastic resin manufactures.

Californians use an estimated 14 billion plastic bags annually, few of which are recycled. Plastic bags are extremely litter-prone because they are light and aerodynamic. Plastic bags are a principal source of the litter in our urban creeks, streams and bays. And this urban litter represents 80% of marine debris.

Plastic marine debris kills thousands of marine animals every year and poses a significant threat to the larger ocean food chain. The problem is only growing, and already in the North Pacific Gyre there is 46 times more plastic than plankton. Currently, the average Californian household pays \$100 annually in fees and taxes to clean up this material.

San Francisco and Malibu have both successfully passed and implemented bans on plastic bags using a CEQA exemption. However, CAW is supportive of the creation of a Master Environmental Assessment by the Ocean Protection Council for those municipalities that wish to conduct an Environmental Impact Report, or have been forced to as a result of plastic industry lawsuits.

Sincerely,

Mark Murray

c.c. Members, California Ocean Protection Council